



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021 **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Leanne Castley MLA: To ask the Minister for Mental Health

Mental Health, ACT Health Annual Report 2020-21, Mental Health Advisory Council

Topic – Mental Health Advisory Council (p44)

I note on p44 that there is a Mental Health Advisory Council which provides advice to the Minister about urgent issues, reforms, policy and legislative changes, etc

Questions:

1. When was the Advisory Council set up and how many times has it met?
2. When was the last time the Advisory Council met with the Minister?
3. How many times has the Advisory Council met Minister Davidson since she became Minister for Mental Health?
4. Does the Council have fixed meeting dates?
5. What urgent issues has the Advisory Council put to the Minister and are the minutes/reports of the meetings publicly available? If not, why not?

[Minister Davidson]: The answer to the Member's questions are as follows:

1. The Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC) was established in 2017 and has met 26 times to date.
2. The MHAC last met with Minister Davidson on 3 March 2022
3. The MHAC has met with Minister Davidson five times since her appointment as Minister.

4. Meeting dates for the MHAC are fixed. These are determined at the beginning of the year for the rest of the year.
5. All MHAC meeting papers and discussions are strictly Council-in-Confidence. The MHAC Secretariat prepares action minutes, recommendations and communiques for the Minister outlining the significant decisions and recommendations by the Council after each meeting. Communiques are to be made publicly available on the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing website.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on workloads and priorities and a number of changes in the secretariat between 2020 and 2021 there has been a delay in publishing the communiques for the meetings over this period. The MHAC Secretariate are currently in the process of finalising the communiques for this period and these will be made available on the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing website once endorsed.

The urgent issues that the Council has advised Minister Davidson on between 2020 and 2022 are as follows:

- mental health reforms;
- developments addressing the mental health of different age groups in particular older person's mental health, new adult mental health centres and addressing the needs of youth;
- the ACT Mental health complaints processes;
- impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences and the need of young people with complex support needs;
- impacts of COVID-19 on mental health; and
- ACT mental health workforce.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature: *Emma Davidson*

Date: 8 March 2022

By the [Minister for Mental Health], [Emma Davidson MLA]